

ADDRESS OF THE REV. CANON JOSEPH WITTKOFSKI, M. S., AT THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ASSOCIATION TO ADVANCE ETHICAL HYPNOSIS, NEW ORLEANS, LA., OCTOBER 17-19, 1969.

Is a religious ministry not existential in nature really any ministry at all?

A man may be set aside, consecrated, seated, and robed in the garments of a bishop but such a one is no real bishop unless he consequently functions as a bishop. The same thing can be said of any other minister, priest, or rabbi. In our dislocated society, we now have clergymen functioning as sociologists, as politicians, and as various kinds of executives. For this reason, because they are operating in a secular role, they have to that same degree relinquished their claim to any sacred ministry.

The purpose of a religious ministry looks to making people aware of their potentiality to become the children of the living God. All the liturgies and structures of organized religion should be directed toward its primary function. Unlike all other things which mankind knows, man himself has an entrance into the innermost recesses of his being. The possession of a reasoning mind and of a will-power marks the human creature in the likeness and image of God. The minister of whatever sort should aim his essential activities toward opening the eyes of people so that they come to recognize their standing face to face with their God. In this relationship, they begin to understand the means through which they can grow more and more God-like. Here is the fundamental for healthy self-esteem which makes love for neighbor and for God into an actual possibility.

Whether people live in the East or in the West, in spite of many external pressures to the contrary, their happiness demands appreciation of the fact that the individual person is more important than the collectivity. Toward this purpose, recognition must be continually cultivated that the human spirit, personal freedom, and the ability to love lifts the individual above the state. People

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could well be the result of an induced self-hypnosis. Experience with many people seemed clearly to justify this approach. If there be solid evidence for such a conclusion, therapy for many should neither be sought in drugs, nor in institutionalization, nor in shock treatment but, instead, in dehypnotization and counter suggestion. The writer's ideas, at the time, produced a storm of ridicule, scorn, and professional questioning. In the October, 1969 issue of Hypnosis Research and Practice, Dr. B. J. Hartman has published an excellent article entitled, "Accidental Autohypnosis: A Hypno-Cybernetic Approach to Emotional Disorders." Dr. Hartman supports the writer's thesis and maintains that the role of suggestion in emotional disorders is largely ignored in professional literature dealing with psychodiagnosis and psychotherapeutic treatment. He writes, "When a person is in the grip of an emotion, the subconscious mind takes over. Just as in hypnosis, there is a loss of consciousness and the person may unknowingly slip into a trance; just as in hypnosis, he becomes extremely suggestible. A remark may be made or the person may have a thought which is accepted or carried out by the subconscious mind as if it were a posthypnotic suggestion. Under intense emotion, the subconscious mind seems to automatically register a statement as though a tape recording is being made. With reinforcement through association (the same as a posthypnotic suggestion) the idea will be carried out compulsively.

For Cora, a severe family crisis produced the emotional situation which became the premises for her autohypnosis. Her anxiety of what others would think and say created the suggestion which took root and grew stronger tending to separate Cora from reality. When the damaging suggestion had been removed by heterohypnosis, she was released from her case of "nerves."

The sensitive minister will always be aware of the importance of suggestion in human living. Several years ago, the writer was spending a vacation in Canada. In the parking lot of a Toronto hotel, he stumbled over a placard which

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had likely been used during a convention at the hotel. It read, "Remember Cancer is neither a Bacteria nor a Virus but is a State of Mind." Psychosomatic research gives reasons to suspect that the mind does play a role in the development of the disease. When a government orders an inscription on each package of cigarettes about possible harm from cigarette smoking, does it not run the risk of using suggestion to spread the disease? When the American Cancer Society uses many coughing and hacking people to introduce an advertisement against smoking, could this not be an immoral use of suggestion? If cancer is promoted by suggestion, we can now expect many more to become its victims who may not have developed it otherwise. An existentially conceived ministry cannot afford to ignore the abuse of suggestion in interpersonal relationships.

The pastoral use of hypnotic technique should never be regarded as a game or as a panacea. It should be employed in the framework of ministerial function. In the chaotic relationships, today, of spirit, mind, and body, sometimes the causative factor for disorder can be pin-pointed in the conscious area. Simple re-education may do the job. There should be no indiscriminate use of hypnosis but, if simple re-education fails, hypnotic technique offers hope.

During the past twenty years, the writer has had the opportunity to work with many hundreds of men, women, and children. Very few failed to respond to hypnosis. Many have been sent to the pastoral study by medical doctors. Among these victims, some required the deadening of the pains of arthritis and other chronic diseases. Some simply required help to overcome fear of dental or surgical assistance. Some needed self-confidence to face an examination or a change of position in life. Others had difficulties with overweight, loss of appetite, nervous spasms, enuresis, insomnia, morbid fears, asthma, allergies, migraine headache, smoking, alcoholism, marital problems, and emotional disturbances..

From the pulpit, the induction of a light trance can more than triple the

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